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# **University of Alberta**

**The Presence of Absence**

by

**Agnieszka Koziarz**

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Master of Fine Arts**

in

**Sculpture**

**Department of Art and Design**

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Fall 2014

Edmonton, Alberta

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# The Presence of Absence

Agnieszka Koziarz

To find my home in one sentence, concise, as if hammered in metal. Not to enchant anybody. Not to earn a lasting name in posterity. An unnamed need for order, for rhythm, for form, which three words are opposed to chaos and nothingness.

— Czeslaw Milosz

In my thesis work I examine the notion of home, a concept which is defined by personal experience and influenced by different landscapes. As an immigrant, I find that as I adjust to the cultural norms in my adopted country, the norms from my country of origin begin to seem less natural to me. As a result, I often feel as though I am hovering “in between” identities and cultures. With a growing awareness of the absence of my old home and self, I am propelled by the desire to create a self that finds its own intrinsic home and displaces the cultural origins of identity.

The absence of one’s home can paradoxically bring it into sharp focus. It can also spur one to find or recreate a new home and identity. Throughout this body of work, I explore the contrast between my fluctuating impulses either to monumentalize my home landscapes while depreciating my adopted landscapes or to disparage my place of origin while romanticizing my adopted home. Have my dreams been shattered or nurtured in Canada or both? As an immigrant, am I empowered or overpowered by my new environment and experience?

As an artist, I attempt to recreate the immigrant’s experience of displacement, disorientation and the process of transformation of individual identity within the context of community through the medium of steel. I express the paradoxical immigrant experience—trying to root one’s identity in the context of changing landscapes—through themes of loss and fragmentation captured in the form of the works, which are in tension with the strength and rootedness of the steel. In this body of work, I test the limits of this material to create sculptures that appear to both acknowledge and defy gravity and time. Through the formal language of art, I convey contradictory notions of vulnerability and strength, obstruction and movement, and balance and instability, which characterize the liminal position occupied by the immigrant. Thus, for me, the transformation of steel becomes a metaphor for the metamorphosis of self.

## Bibliography

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Agnew, Vijay. *Where I Come From*. Waterloo, Ont: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003.

Akhtar, Salman. "The Immigrant, the Exile, and the Experience of Nostalgia." *Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies* 1.2 (1999): 123-130.

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Hermandsdorfer, Mariusz. *Between Expression and Metaphor*. Wroclaw, Poland: National Museum of Wroclaw, 1999.

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Horn, Michiel. *Becoming Canadian: Memoirs of an invisible immigrant*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.

Ilcan, Suzan. *Longing In Belonging: the Cultural Politics of Settlement*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002.

Kaplan, Alice. *French Lessons: A Memoir*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Kaplan, Alice. "On Language Memoir." *Displacements. Cultural Identities in Question*. Ed. Angelika Bammer. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 59-70.

Miłosz, Czesław. *Native Realm: a Search for Self-definition*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968.

Miłosz, Czesław. *Wiersze Wszystkie*. Krakow (Poland): Wydawnictwo Znak, 2011.

Newton, John. *The Emigrant*. Ed. D.M.R. Bentley. London, Ont.: Canadian Poetry Press, 2000.

Piotrowski, Ryszard A. *Biographies of Polish Artists in Canada*. Toronto: Canadian Polish Research Institute, 1994.

Rose, Gillian. *Mourning Becomes the Law: Philosophy and Representation*. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Saunders, Margaret. *Bridging the Gap: Immigrant Poems*. Goderich, Ont.: Moonstone Press, c1990.

Végső, Roland. "The Mother Tongues of Modernity: Modernism, Transnationalism, Translation." *Journal of Modern Literature* 33.2 (2010): 24-46.

## Acknowledgments

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Lastly, I also would love to thank my colleagues for their support and help in the hardest moments of my journey throughout my MFA: Salim Azzam, Andrew Hellmund, Stan Luszczynski, Misa Nikolic, Steven Pardy, Bernice Pelletier, Layal Shuman, Stan Szymanski, Barry Thomas, Hope Wells, Anne Winkle, and Janusz Zielecki.

Agnieszka Koziarz



# AGNIESZKA KOZIARZ

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## EDUCATION

2014	Master of Fine Arts Degree, Sculpture, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta
2011	Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree (distinction), Printmaking and Sculpture, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta
2007	Honours Bachelor of Arts (transfer to University of Alberta), McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario
1998	Richard Robinson Academy of Fashion Design, Ottawa, Ontario Diploma in Fashion Design, Haute Couture (Magna Cum Laude)

## ART RELATED EXPERIENCES

2014	Laboratory Assistant, ART 362 - Sculpture, University of Alberta, Canada
2014	Primary Instructor, subject, ART 134 - Art Fundamentals, University of Alberta, Canada
2013	Laboratory Assistant, ART 134 - Art Fundamentals, University of Alberta, Canada
2013	Laboratory Assistant, ART 134 - Art Fundamentals, University of Alberta, Canada
2013	Laboratory Supervisor, ART 134 - Art Fundamentals, University of Alberta, Canada
2012	Graduate Teaching Assistant, ART 137 - Art Fundamentals, University of Alberta, Canada
2013	<i>Encoding/Decoding Graduate Student Symposium 2013</i> , University of Alberta Art and Design Graduate Student Association – Exhibition Committee
2013	<i>Spring Thaw Fundraiser</i> for Graduate Student Symposium 2013, University of Alberta – volunteer/art donor
2012	Metal Sculpting Residency, Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Poland
2011	<i>Christmas in the Heartland</i> , ice-sculpture commission, Bethany Community Church, Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta
2010	<i>Strange Bird</i> , artist book dedicated to homeless people, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta
2009	<i>On the Wings of Icarus</i> , artist book dedicated to youth, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta
2009	<i>Out of the Shadows Program</i> , Harcourt House - Volunteer Art Class Instructor, Edmonton, Alberta

2008 Schizophrenia Society of Alberta – Volunteer Video Editor/ Photographer (“Peers Supporting Housing Pilot” documentary video) presented at “Through Mind and Hand to Health – Occupational Therapy in Psychiatry Conference”, Edmonton, Alberta

2008 *Edmonton Print International 2008*, Edmonton, Alberta – Volunteer (preparation and installation)

2006 Drawing and Painting Portfolio Preparation, Hamilton, Ontario – Private Tutor

1999 Fashion Show – Grande Premiere’99, Ottawa, Ontario – Guest Juror

1998 Aga’s Designs, Independent Fashion Designer, Ottawa, Ontario

1997 Fashion House of Richard Robinson, Fashion Designer, Ottawa, Ontario

## HONORS/ AWARDS

2014 Walter H Johns Graduate Fellowship, University of Alberta

2014 Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship (SSHRC), Ottawa, Ontario

2013 The Alberta Foundation for Arts Scholarship, Alberta, Canada

2012 Queen Elizabeth II Scholarship, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

2007 University Achievement Award, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario

2007 Dean’s Honour List, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario

1998 Mattel Inc. Fashion Awards for Business Outfit, 1st prize, Ottawa, Ontario

## SOLO EXHIBITION

2014 *The Presence of Absence*, Exhibition for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture, FAB Gallery, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

2009 *Prints* [juried] – Multicultural Centre Public Art Gallery, Stony Plain, Alberta

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2014 *The Winds of Time* [juried], Muttart Conservatory, Edmonton. Alberta

2014 *Wtajemniczeni – Wtajemniczani*, [juried], OdNowa Gallery, Lodz, Poland

2014 *January’s Mist* [juried], Galerie ISBE EDMONTON, Edmonton, Alberta

2014 *Book as a Weapon of Change* [juried], University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

2013 *Makers and Shapers* [juried], International Sculpture Symposium Exhibition [juried], Miami, Florida, United States

2013 *Prismatika* [juried], Steppes Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta

2013 *From Tradition to Innovation* [juried], Kobra Gallery, Academy of Fine Arts, Lodz, Poland

2013 *Gaia* [juried], Muttart Conservatory, Edmonton, Alberta

2013 *Square One Exhibition & Fundraiser* [juried], St. Albert Gallery, St. Albert, Alberta

2013 *Living in Between* [juried], Telus Center, Edmonton, Alberta

2012 *Bookmarks* – intermedia installation MFA Students, Rutherford Library South, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

2012 *Polish Mosaic* [juried], Steppes Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta

2012 *Anima: the Spirit of Life* [juried], Muttart Conservatory, Edmonton, Alberta

2012 *Chronicles in Motion* [juried], Gallery at Milner, Edmonton, Alberta

2012 SMTG International Print Triennial [juried], Cracow, Poland

2012 *Square One Exhibition & Fundraiser* [juried], St. Albert Gallery, St. Albert, Alberta

2011 *Print Affair*, SNAP Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta

2011 *Not So Mini* [juried], Artist Proof Gallery, Calgary, Alberta

2010 *Summer Rhapsody Abstract Sculpture Exhibition* [juried], Karen's Garden Gallery, St. Albert, Alberta

2010 *Print Affair*, SNAP Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta

2010 *International Week – Earth Tones*, Rutherford Library South, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

2010 *Debutante's Ball*, Gallery at Enterprise Square, Edmonton, Alberta

2010 *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* [juried], FAB Gallery, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

2010 *In Between Surfaces*, SNAP Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta

2009 *PROSPECTUS* [juried], SNAP Gallery, Graff Galerie, Belfast Festival, Edmonton, Alberta; Montreal, Quebec; Belfast, Ireland

2009 *Print Affair*, SNAP Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta

2009 *Under the Impression Et Al* [juried], FAB Gallery, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

2009 *Varsolsa* [juried], Red Strap Gallery/SNAP, Edmonton, Alberta

2007 Graphic Design Group Exhibition, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario

## COLLECTIONS

Museum Kowalstwa, Wojciechow, Poland

Selected art works, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

Selected art works, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario

*Under the Impression* and *In Between Surfaces*, print portfolios acquired by the University of Alberta

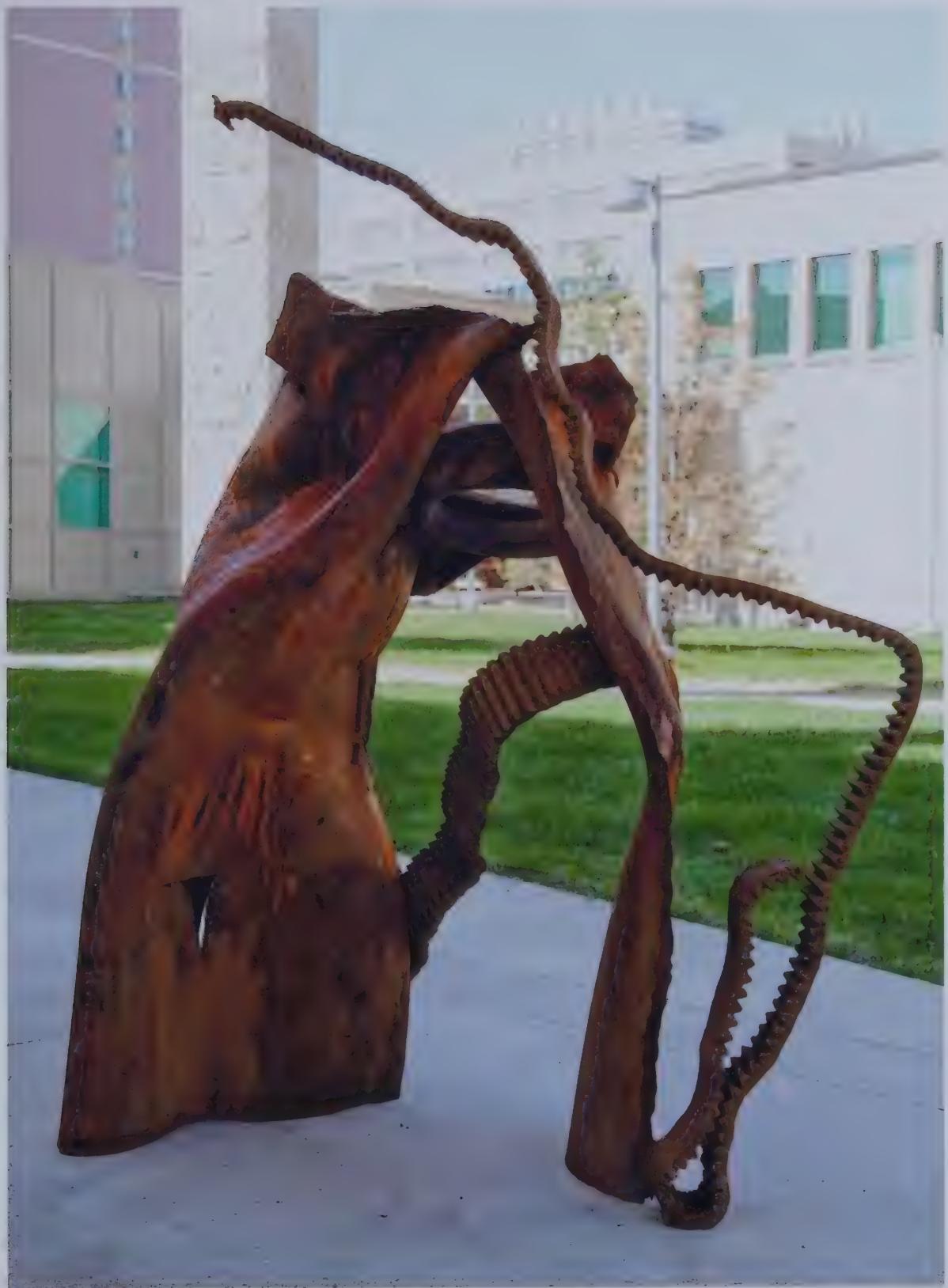
Museum and Collections, Print Study Centre, Edmonton, Alberta

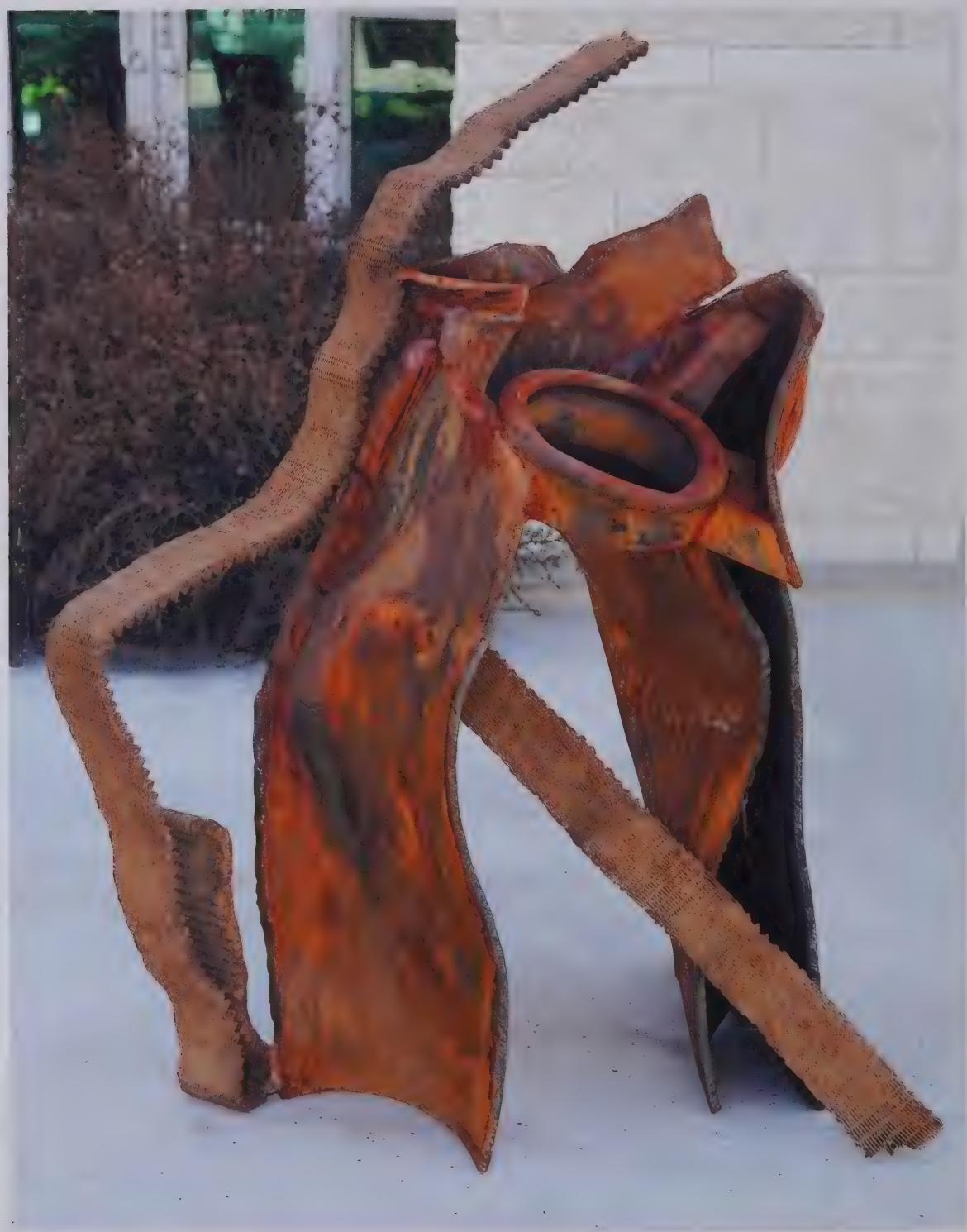
Selected art works, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario

Private collection of paintings, Amal Abdul-Baki, Lebanon

Graphic designs, Musical Theatre of Wroclaw, Wroclaw, Poland





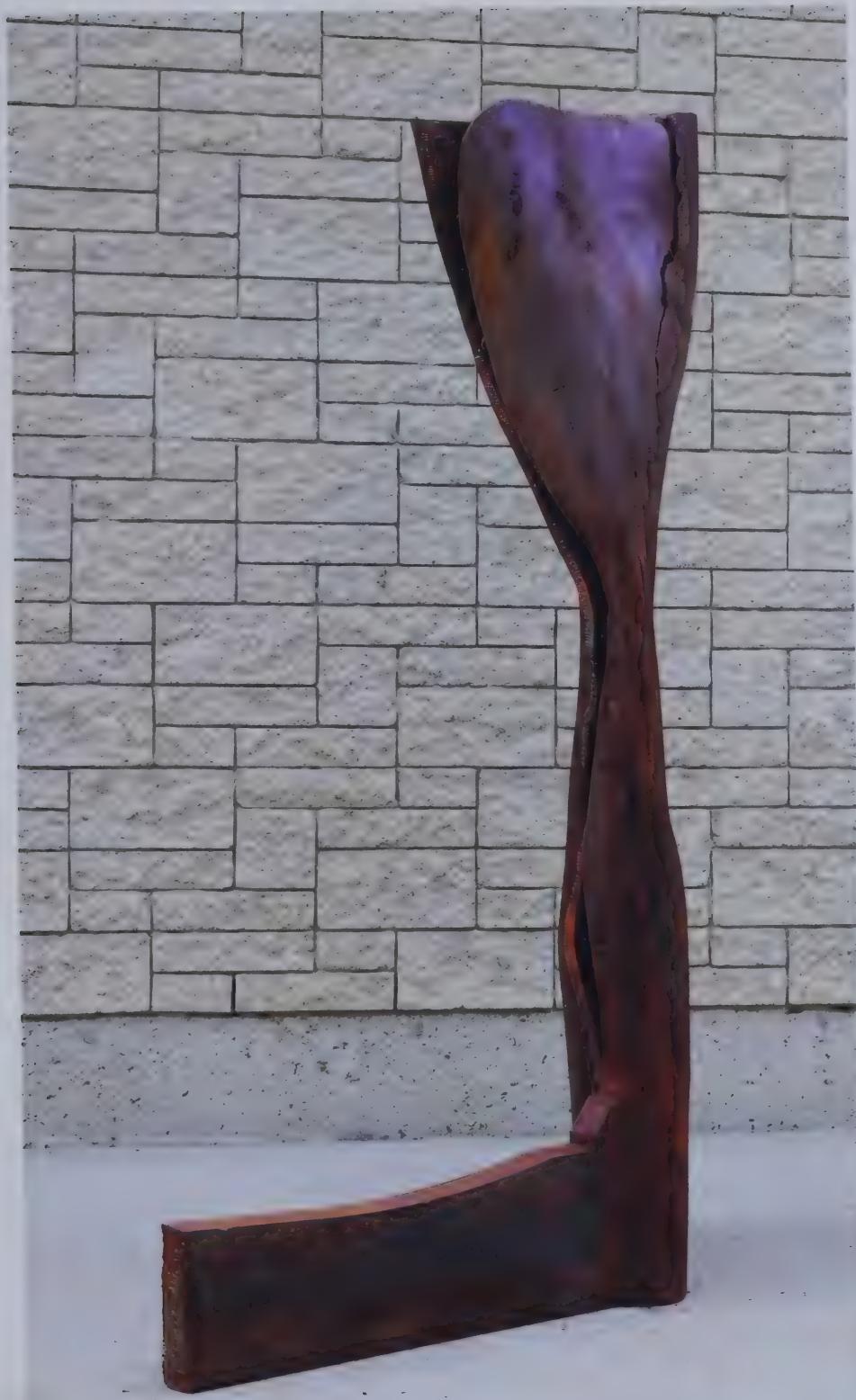








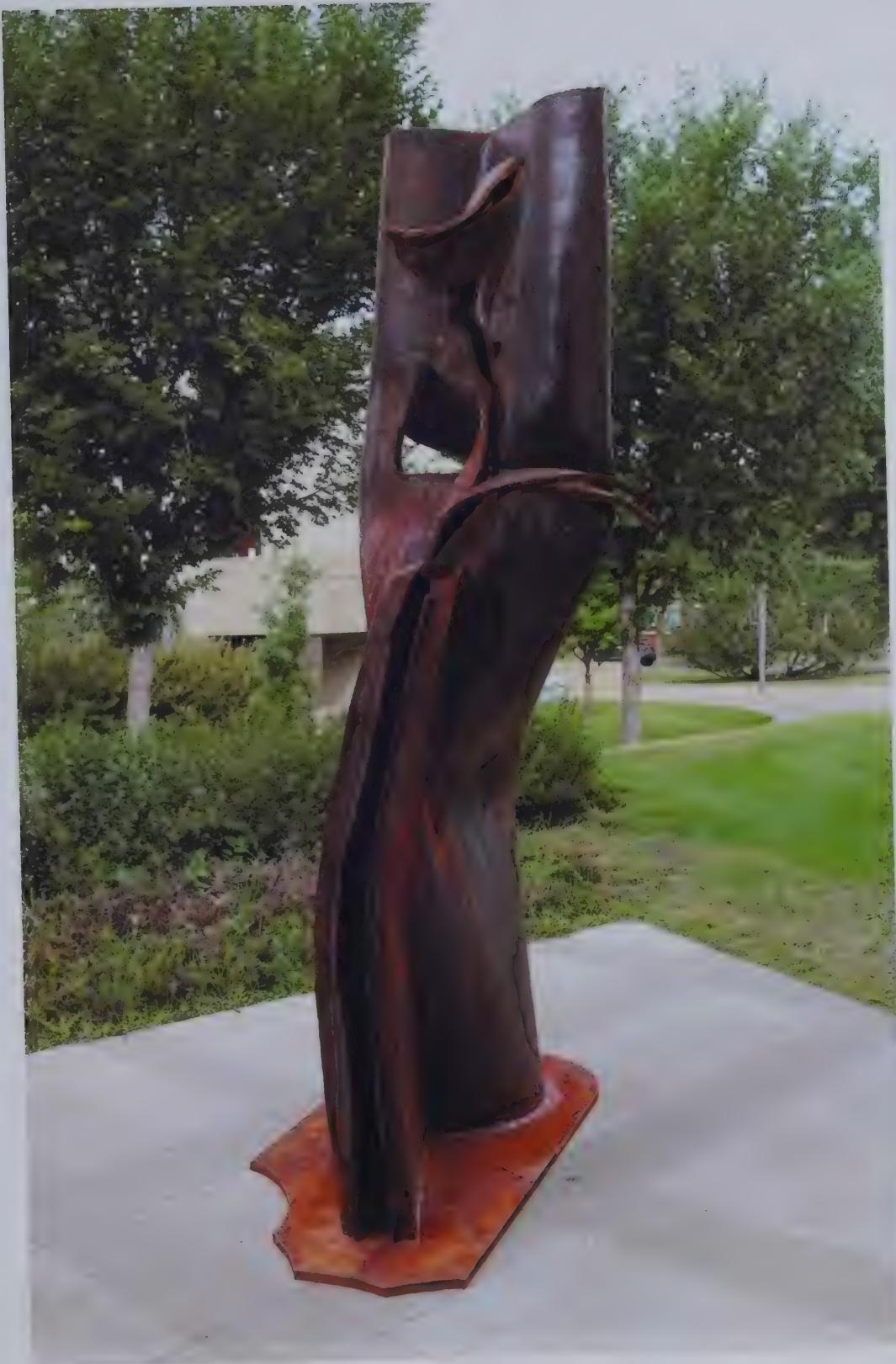


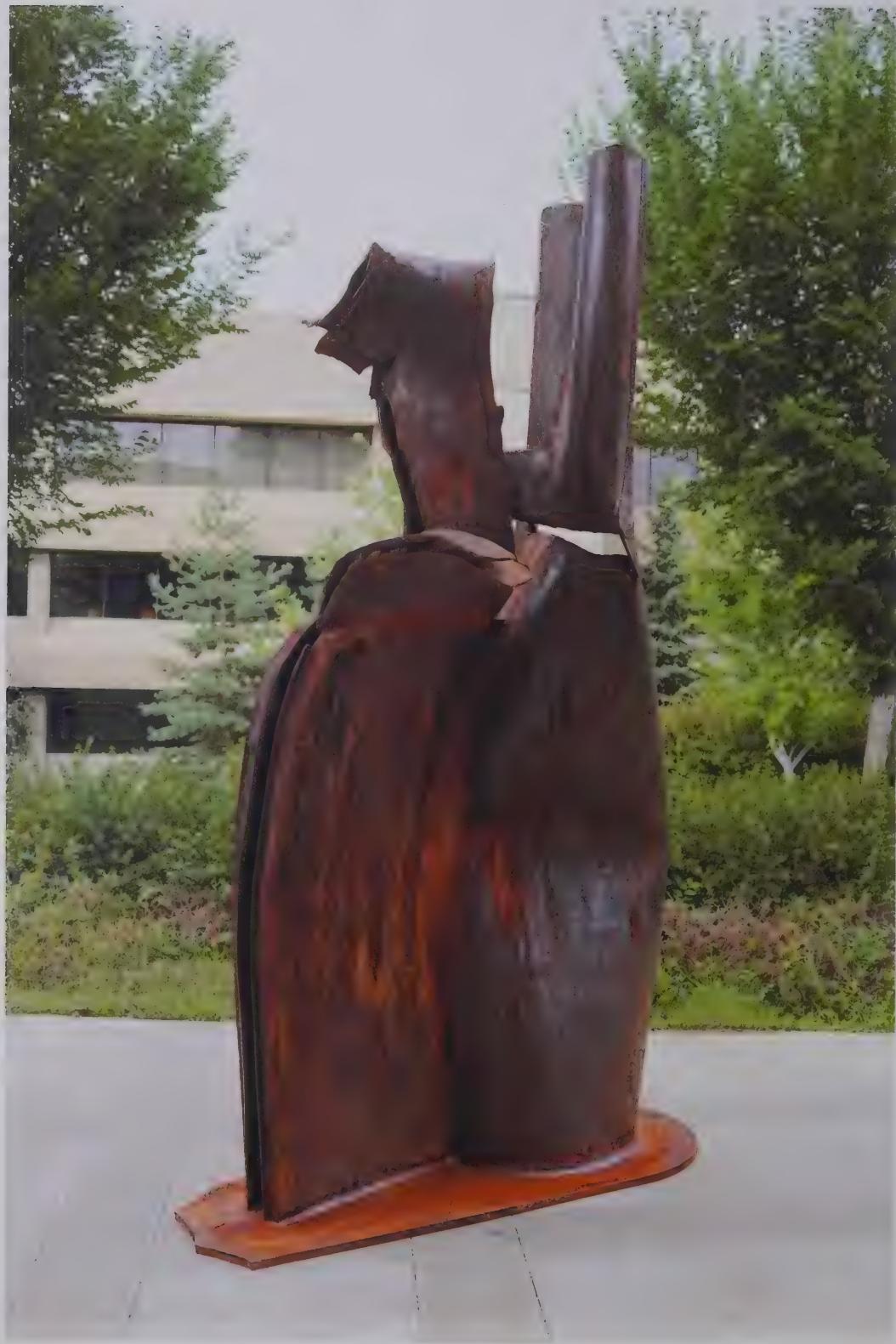
































































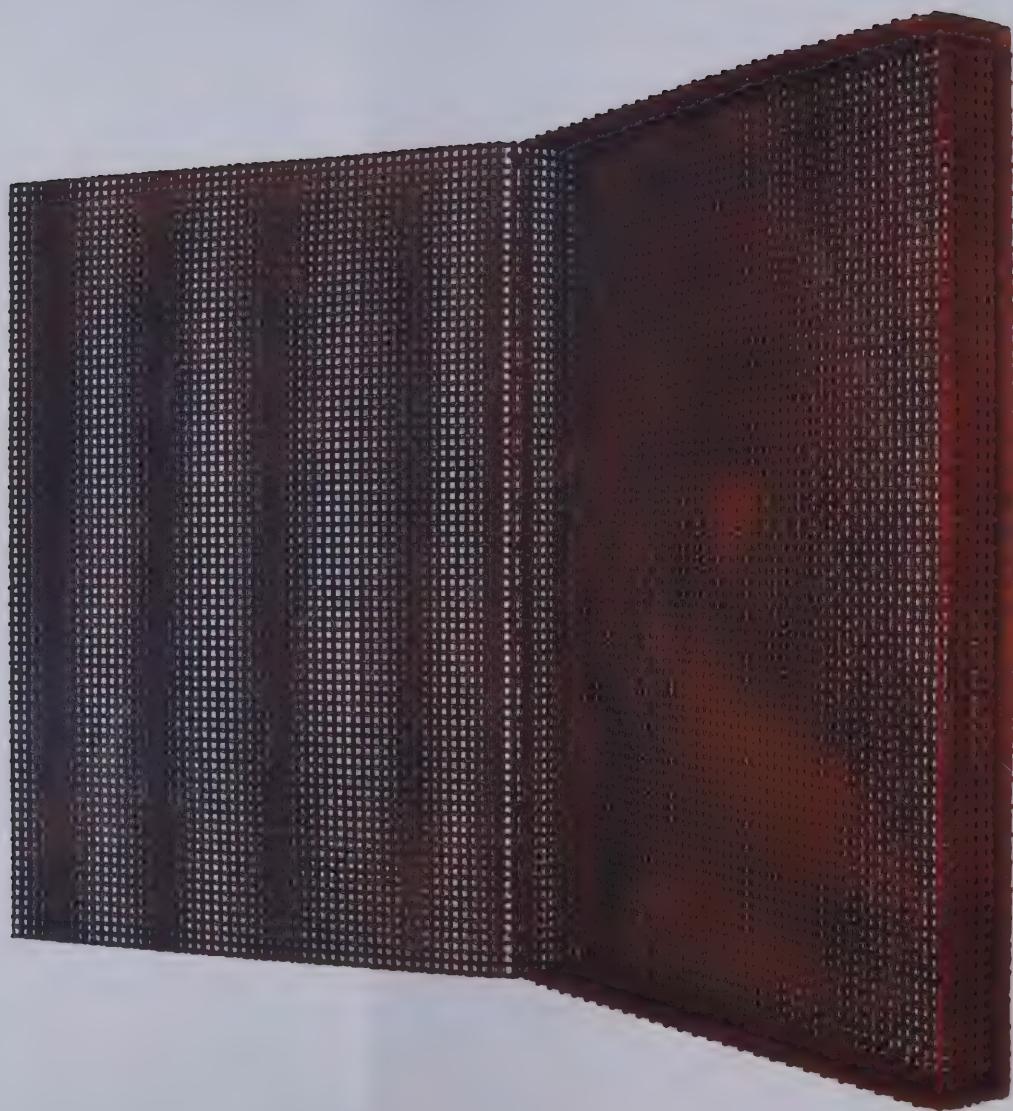












## DVD IMAGE LIST

### *The Presence of Absence*

Agnieszka Koziarz

- File name: koziarz.01

Title: ***Frenetic***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 141 x 42 x 30"

View: 1

- File name: koziarz.02

Title: ***Frenetic***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 141 x 42 x 30"

View: 2

- File name: koziarz.03

Title: ***Frenetic***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 141 x 42 x 30"

View: 3 (fragment)

- File name: koziarz.04

Title: ***The Presence of Absence***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 67 x 67 x 42"

- File name: koziarz.05

Title: ***Déracine***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 90.5 x 26 x 55.5"

View: 1

- File name: koziarz.06

Title: *Déracné*

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 90.5 x 26 x 55.5"

View: 2

- File name: koziarz.07

Title: *Déracné*

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 90.5 x 26 x 55.5"

View: 3

- File name: koziarz.08

Title: *Déracné*

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 90.5 x 26 x 55.5"

View: 4

- File name: koziarz.09

Title: *Déracné*

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 90.5 x 26 x 55.5"

View: 5 (fragment)

- File name: koziarz.10

Title: *Transcending Emptiness*

Date: 2014

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 306 x 183 x 50"

View: 1

- File name: koziarz.11

Title: *Transcending Emptiness*

Date: 2014

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 306 x 183 x 50"

View: 2

- File name: koziarz.12  
Title: ***Transcending Emptiness***  
Date: 2014  
Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture  
Dimensions: 306 x 183 x 50"  
View: 3

- File name: koziarz.13  
Title: ***Easy to Catch Flame***  
Date: 2013  
Materials: paper, ink and paint, mild steel welded and rusted sculpture  
Dimensions: 49 x 54 x 34"

- File name: koziarz.14  
Title: ***Fragment 1***  
Date: 2014  
Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture  
Dimensions: 8 x 8 x 8"  
View: 1

- File name: koziarz.15  
Title: ***Fragment 1***  
Date: 2014  
Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture  
Dimensions: 8 x 8 x 8"  
View: 2

- File name: koziarz.16  
Title: ***Fragment 2***  
Date: 2014  
Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture  
Dimensions: 15 x 16 x 12"  
View: 1

- File name: koziarz.17  
Title: ***Fragment 2***  
Date: 2014  
Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture  
Dimensions: 15 x 16 x 12"  
View: 2

- File name: koziarz.18

Title: ***Fragment 2***

Date: 2014

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 15 x 16 x 12"

View: 3

- File name: koziarz.19

Title: ***Compression***

Date: 2014

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 36.5 x 126 x 71"

View: 1

- File name: koziarz.20

Title: ***Compression***

Date: 2014

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 36.5 x 126 x 71"

View: 2

- File name: koziarz.21

Title: ***Compression***

Date: 2014

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 36.5 x 126 x 71"

View: 3 (fragment)

- File name: koziarz.22

Title: ***Unfolding***

Date: 2014

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 42 x 15 x 12"

- File name: koziarz.23

Title: ***Rzeka***

Date: 2014

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 27 x 192 x 100"

View: 1

- File name: koziarz.24

Title: ***Rzeka***

Date: 2014

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 27 x 192 x 100"

View: 2

- File name: koziarz.25

Title: ***Battle***

Date: 2014

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 33 x 23 x 19"

- File name: koziarz.26

Title: ***When Language Takes on Hue***

Date: 2014

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 26.5 x 33 x 22"

- File name: koziarz.27

Title: ***Fragile***

Date: 2014

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: Dimensions: 18.5 x 14 x 15.25"

View: 1

- File name: koziarz.28

Title: ***Fragile***

Date: 2014

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: Dimensions: 18.5 x 14 x 15.25"

View: 2

- File name: koziarz.29

Title: ***Living in Between***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 89 x 37 x 61.5"

View: 1

- File name: koziarz.30

Title: ***Living in Between***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 89 x 37 x 61.5"

View: 2

- File name: koziarz.31

Title: ***Diaspora***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted

Dimensions: 37 x 30 x 29"

View: 1

- File name: koziarz.32

Title: ***Diaspora***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted

Dimensions: 37 x 30 x 29"

View: 2 (fragment)

- File name: koziarz.33

Title: ***Wishing Well***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted

Dimensions: 43.5 x 40 x 41"

View: 1

- File name: koziarz.34

Title: ***Wishing Well***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted

Dimensions: 43.5 x 40 x 41"

View: 2

- File name: koziarz.35

Title: ***The Ausländer***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 69 x 45 x 57"

View: 1

- File name: koziarz.36

Title: ***The Ausländer***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 69 x 45 x 57"

View: 2

- File name: koziarz.37

Title: ***The Ausländer***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 69 x 45 x 57"

View: 3

- File name: koziarz.38

Title: ***Collected Works 1***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: Various

- File name: koziarz.39

Title: ***Collected Works 2***

Date: 2013

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: Various

- File name: koziarz.40

Title: ***Steel Box***

Date: 2014

Materials: mild steel welded and rusted sculpture

Dimensions: 3.5 x 21 x 29"



PRESENCE OR ABSENCE  
KAZIMIERZ  
KONIECKA  
1<sup>ST</sup> SCULPTURE  
MFA 2014

IMAGES : SUPPLEMENTAL  
DOCUMENTS





